

HANDBOOK OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND SCHOOL HEALTH:

A guide for Medical Officers of Schools. By the Medical Officers of Schools Association. Fourteenth Edition. (Pp. xii+141. 15s). London: J. & A. Churchill, 1969.

THIS is the fourteenth edition of a handbook that first appeared in 1885 issued by the Medical Officers of Schools Association, because, to quote the preface to the first addition, "... claiming immediate attention was the need for the general adoption of more definite rules for guarding our great educational establishments from the outbreak and spread of preventible infectious disease." The greater part of the book still deals with communicable disease in the form of an alphabetically arranged catalogue from Bornholm Disease to Worms, under the headings, Definition & Cause, Diagnosis, Infection and Transmission, Incubation Period, Period of Communicability, Immunity, Prevalence, Methods of Control, Treatment, and Return to School. The list covers all the common communicable diseases in this country including trichomonas and the venereal diseases, and although it treats them more briefly than its nearest rival the similarly sized Control of Communicable Diseases in Man, of the American Public Health Association, the handbook is more up to date in many respects. For example, the mysterious epidemic syncope and immunisation against measles are included. Rubella and pregnancy are thoroughly discussed including the desirability of immunity to rubella in girls at an early age. Among diseases which are troublesome in Ulster plantarwarts and scabies are well described, but it is surprising to find that no exclusion from school is advised for ringworm, that no mention is made of contact tracing with Wood's light for the fluorescent types of *Tinea Capitis* nor brush-and-comb culture for the non-fluorescent, and the role of pet cats and dogs in spreading the disease is not emphasised.

The text is for the most part attractively written and unequivocal, though the entry under the heading Food Poisoning Immunity, "None per se", may leave some readers in doubt. Pages 119 to 126 were missing from the reviewer's copy, but the book is singularly free from typographical and alignment errors, and has a fresh, uncluttered, and consistent layout that makes for quick and easy reference.

As well as communicable diseases the handbook now includes sections on some other aspects of the school medical officer's work such as hygiene, disinfection, immunisation, adolescence, medical examinations, and health education. Some of these matters are dealt with so briefly as to emphasise that we are reading a handbook rather than a textbook; Dental Supervision, for example, gets five lines advising that treatment be obtained during holidays unless the parents are overseas. A notable exception is the excellent article on menstruation which is modern in approach and deals quite fully with the problems of dysmenorrhoea, menorrhagia, menstrual irregularity, and amenorrhoea. It discusses hormone therapy, internal tampons and anaemia in schoolgirls, and the advice is clear, practical, and confident. This article is a model of its kind and will be of great value for health visitors and others who have to advise pupils, parents, and teachers on menstrual problems, and to prepare material for health education. Adolescence is also treated at some length and the topics dealt with include alcohol, smoking, drugs, sexual problems, and emotional disorders. In this section the author is less assured, and it is difficult to agree with the passage on emotional disorders which begins, "Although the school Medical Officer may not have many cases of emotional instability to deal with, he will find that they can take up a lot of his time. It is a truism to say that, although adolescence is physically the fittest time in life, emotionally it is the sickest. The school Medical Officer is at a considerable disadvantage in dealing with such cases". In spite of the gloomy despair of this passage the problems of promiscuity, homosexuality, and masturbation in the young are given very sympathetic consideration.

This handbook is written very much from the point of view of the part-time school doctor at a fee-paying residential private school and much of it will read quaintly to local authority doctors, who will scan the index in vain for the subjects which occupy most of their time and energy such as handicapped pupils, intelligence, educational subnormality, defects of vision and hearing, truancy, school refusal, broken homes, child guidance clinics. Local authority doctors who regard the whole of their work and indeed the whole contents of this book as preventive medicine will also be surprised to find this term used to head a half-page article on Physical Conditions (fresh air, etc.), Behaviour Problems, Rest and Exercise, and Risks from

Accidents. They will also find that the Education Acts are not mentioned and that the book is hazy on relationships affecting the school doctor, the headmaster, the Medical Officer of Health, and the Local Education Authority. Many will disagree also with the advice that "a routine chest X-ray from the age of 13 is desirable", and will wonder that a first-aid box is necessary in the kitchen, but is not asked for elsewhere in the school.

Nevertheless, the main part of the book is on communicable diseases and here it is difficult to find faults. No school doctor can afford to be without a copy in the glove compartment of his car. A.L.W.

LIVINGSTONE'S POCKET MEDICAL DICTIONARY (LOIS OAKES). By Nancy Roper, S.R.N., R.S.C.N., R.N.T. Eleventh Edition. (Pp xvi+590. 9s 6d). Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1969.

THIS little book first published in 1933 is in its eleventh edition and has been many times reprinted. It has thus proved itself as a valuable aid, and it continues to fill an important place. It contrives to give much information in small space and, indeed, in some respects is more informative than some larger dictionaries. As well as brief, usually excellent, definitions it includes many relevant abbreviations, notes on urine testing, physiological normal values and even the telephone numbers of regional poison information centres. This book will be of great value to nurses and to the many ancillary workers in medicine. Many medical men will find it useful and, while not all will agree with all details of usage, it is a useful guide to all but the more specialised words in medicine.

DISEASES OF THE NOSE, THROAT AND EAR: A Handbook for Students and Practitioners. By I. S. Hall and B. H. Coleman. Ninth Edition. (Pp. xii+443; figs. 88. 35s). Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1969.

THE ninth edition, appearing two years after the eighth, contains minor alterations and some new illustrations. In the treatment of sinusitis in children, antrum lavage and the indwelling tube is mentioned for the first time, although in general use for some years. There is now a short note on glandular fever and another on miscellaneous conditions of the neck, such as branchial cysts and fistula, thyroglossal cysts and fistula and lesions of the salivary glands. The colour illustrations of lesions of the tympanic membrane are improved. The old terminology 'catarrh of the Eustachian tube' is replaced by 'insufficiency of the Eustachian tube'. The use of grommet tubes in the treatment of chronic Eustachian insufficiency and secretory otitis media is now included. ACTH is strongly advised in the treatment of Bell's palsy. A good synopsis of chemo-therapy of cancer is given.

The ninth edition should continue to be popular with students, house surgeons and general practitioners. J.K.H.

THE WORK OF A FAMILY DOCTOR. By R. M. McGregor, O.B.E., T.D., M.B., Ch.B. (Pp. ix+266. 45s). Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1969.

THE author of this book, a general practitioner of many years' experience, categorizes in detail the main diseases met in his general practice and during the eleven and a half years 1948-1960. He explains his methods of collecting his practice statistics to ensure accuracy. A discussion about the statistics of each disease contains references to particular cases the author has found to be of special interest and in these discussions therapeutic advice is given.

This book would be of value for reference purposes as it is an accurate record of the work of the practice. Its length could possibly be reduced without detracting from its value. The therapeutic advice offered may not be suitable for every reader, but contains material which would stimulate a reader to examine his own therapeutic efforts. The price of 45s. for the book appears to be a little excessive.

This book will be used mainly in a library as a reference book rather than on a general practitioner's book-shelf. A.G.McK.